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Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States

Report of the Secretary-General**

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 55/22 of 10 November 2000, the General Assembly, inter alia, recognized that the purposes and objectives of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) are in conformity with the principles and ideals embodied in the Charter of the United Nations; requested the Secretary-General to take the appropriate steps to establish cooperation between the United Nations and ECCAS; and welcomed the support provided by the Secretary-General to the States members of ECCAS in strengthening confidence-building measures at the subregional level and promoting human rights, the rule of law and democratic institutions, in implementation of the programme of work of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

2. The General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to continue this support and, within the existing United Nations budget, extend it to all the fields to be covered in the framework of cooperation between the United Nations system and ECCAS, especially the reinforcement of the structures of the Community and the attainment of its objectives in favour of peace and security, democracy and human rights, so as to facilitate the operation of the early-warning mechanism in central Africa as a tool for preventing armed conflicts and to establish a subregional parliament and a subregional centre for human rights and democracy in central Africa to promote democratic values and experience and human rights; emphasized the importance of appropriate coordination between the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, and ECCAS; urged all Member States and the international community to contribute to the efforts of ECCAS to achieve economic integration and development, promote democracy and human rights and consolidate peace and security in central Africa; welcomed and called for the continuation of the efforts made by a number of States, notably in the form of multinational exercises, to enhance the peacekeeping capacities of the States members of ECCAS, so as to enable them to play a larger part in United Nations operations; requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its fifty-sixth session a report on the implementation of resolution 55/22. At its 84th plenary meeting, on 12 December 2000, the General Assembly,

* A/56/150.

** The delay in submitting this report is due to the lengthy period needed to receive input from various units for compilation and inclusion in the report.

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in its resolution 55/161, decided to invite ECCAS to participate as an observer in its sessions and its work.[1]

3. ECCAS, which has its headquarters in Libreville, was established in 1983, initially with the goals of promoting economic development and integration and fostering a common market among member States of the central African subregion. These goals were later expanded to include efforts to promote peace and security. ECCAS comprises 11 central African States[2] with a combined population of approximately 100 million inhabitants and covers a land area of six million square kilometres. From its inception, ECCAS member States sought to promote and achieve the objectives set until 1992, when the organization became less active and had a significantly lower profile at a time when the region was increasingly facing severe threats and conflicts. The conflicts not only resulted in large numbers of casualties but also generated enormous socio-economic, humanitarian and political consequences, which inhibited progress in the realization of the objectives of ECCAS.

4. Despite the absence of sustained institutional interaction between the United Nations and ECCAS during much of the Community's existence, the Organization worked closely with ECCAS member States, both individually and jointly, in a number of critical areas, including efforts to restore subregional confidence-building and cooperation and to promote peace and reconstruction. With the establishment, in May 1992, at the request of the General Assembly, of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, a mechanism for joint discussion on effective ways and means of addressing the growing threats of instability in the subregion was introduced. Since then, the United Nations, the ECCAS secretariat and regional States have worked closely together, especially in pursuing arms restraint and disarmament in order to contribute to sustainable peace and progress in central Africa.

5. The adoption by the General Assembly of its resolution 55/22 to promote cooperation between the United Nations and ECCAS and its resolution 55/161 giving ECCAS observer status in the General Assembly came against the background of recent initiatives by ECCAS itself to revitalize its operations, especially through the decision by heads of State to set up the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), an early-warning mechanism to help prevent new conflicts in the subregion, a subregional parliament and a subregional centre for human rights and democracy in central Africa.

6. The present report is submitted in compliance with the Assembly's request in its resolution 55/22 and is based on information received from various departments, offices, bodies, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system. Ultimately, the effectiveness of any cooperation between the United Nations and ECCAS would have to include the support that States Members of the Organization as a whole are prepared to extend to central African States.

II. Action taken by the United Nations system

A. Department of Political Affairs

7. Since the adoption of resolution 55/22, the Deputy Secretary-General for Peace, Security and Humanitarian Affairs of ECCAS has exchanged views on a regular basis with officials of the Department of Political Affairs on ways and means of ensuring peace and security in the subregion. In those discussions, emphasis has been placed on seeking United Nations support to ensure the functioning of the ECCAS Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, the early-warning mechanism for central Africa (mécanisme d'alerte rapide de l'Afrique centrale (MARAC)) to help prevent new conflicts and the Multinational Force for Central Africa (Force multinationale de l'Afrique centrale (FOMAC)), which could be deployed for the resolution and management of conflicts in the subregion.

8. In the view of the ECCAS secretariat, the long experience and wide expertise of the United Nations in the fields of conflict prevention and crisis management could valuably be tailored to address the peculiar context of central Africa. To that end, ECCAS is of the view that specific United Nations efforts in the consolidation of peace, including through the promotion of democratic governance, the rule of law,

[1] The present report is based on information received as of 30 July 2001. Any replies received after that date will be incorporated in an addendum or addenda to the report.

[2] Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe.

respect for human rights and the advancement of sustainable development, could be particularly helpful in energizing the work of the subregion's early-warning and prevention efforts. It was suggested that once the various subregional peace mechanisms, including COPAX, FOMAC and MARAC, became operational, joint sensitization and training workshops could be envisaged through which appropriate units of the United Nations Secretariat could help strengthen the effective functioning of these institutions.

9. Discussions have also focused on how the United Nations could assist ECCAS, especially COPAX, in dealing with issues of sanctions, embargoes and commissions of inquiry in the search for solutions to conflicts in the subregion.

B. Department of Peacekeeping Operations

10. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and ECCAS held preliminary discussions with a view to establishing closer contacts and developing cooperation in areas of mutual concern. As ECCAS assumes a more active role in regional peacekeeping matters, DPKO will, as with other subregional partners, cooperate with ECCAS for the purposes of sharing and exchanging information, conducting peacekeeping exercises and holding training programmes and related peace support activities. In this regard, the Standby Arrangements Unit has begun briefing ECCAS member States with a view to encouraging their participation in the system, particularly within the framework of peacekeeping operations in central Africa.

11. To date, discussions have been held to that end with the permanent missions to the United Nations of regional States, including Rwanda (26 April 2001) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (14 June 2001), primarily to inform them of the existence of the system and of procedures for their participation in it and in United Nations peacekeeping operations in general.

12. The contacts with the permanent missions have revealed that there is considerable potential for strengthening the subregion's peacekeeping capabilities, although there is limited knowledge of specific aspects of United Nations peacekeeping arrangements, including the standby system. Among the suggestions that emerged from the discussions with the permanent missions, particularly with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, are the following: visits to Member States by staff of the standby unit should be scheduled; greater cooperation among subregional States on peacekeeping issues should be encouraged as a way of enhancing regional cooperation and confidence-building; even if some Member States cannot provide formed units for peacekeeping operations, the contribution of military observers, staff officers and appropriate personnel for guard and administrative duties would be a good starting point. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is now a member of the Standby Arrangements System.

C. Department for Disarmament Affairs

13. Since May 1992, when the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was established, the Department for Disarmament Affairs, which serves as the secretariat of the Committee, has worked closely with ECCAS in promoting peace and security in the central African subregion. Cooperation has been strengthened in this regard through the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, based in Lomé.

14. During the period under review, the ECCAS secretariat was invited to the fifteenth ministerial meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee, held in Bujumbura from 16 to 20 April 2001 and to the meeting of experts, held in Libreville from 2 to 5 July 2001, at which States members of the Committee discussed the modalities for the establishment of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa. For its part, the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa is providing assistance to the Governments of Cameroon, the Central African Republic and Chad on a joint weapons collection project aimed at curbing the flow of illicit weapons along their common borders. In addition, the Regional Centre is providing advisory services to ECCAS with regard to the creation of national commissions for weapons collection.

D. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

15. Within the framework of its regional approach, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner

for Human Rights is working in close cooperation with the Department of Political Affairs to set up the United Nations Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, to be based in Yaoundé. The establishment of the Centre responds to a formal request made by the Governments of ECCAS member States.

16. The initiative for the creation of the Centre was first taken at the fourth ministerial meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee, held in Yaoundé from 7 to 8 April 1994, at which member States recommended the establishment of the Centre, under the auspices of the Office of the High Commissioner, with the following mandate: (i) contribute to the training of Government personnel working in the field of human rights; (ii) support the establishment and/or strengthen national human rights institutions; and (iii) assist in the dissemination and promotion of the wider understanding of international human rights instruments.

17. The General Assembly endorsed the request and added to the mandate of the proposed Centre the development and promotion of a culture of democracy in the subregion. Subsequently, on 4 December 1998 and 1 December 1999, the General Assembly adopted resolutions 53/78 A and 54/55 A, respectively, by which it requested the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner to lend their support to the establishment of the Centre.

18. In June 2000, the Office of the High Commissioner adopted a subregional strategy for central Africa and the Great Lakes region, with, inter alia, the following objectives: (i) intensify dialogue with the secretariat of ECCAS with a view to including human rights on the agenda of its organs and to strengthening its capacities in the field of human rights; (ii) consult with ECCAS regarding the development of a subregional framework plan of action for human rights in central Africa and the Great Lakes region, especially with respect to the human rights of women, children, elders, minorities and human rights defenders; and (iii) support the establishment of a Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa.

19. Subsequently, with respect to the proposed establishment of the Centre, the Office of the High Commissioner and the Department of Political Affairs carried out from 4 to 11 June 2000 a joint needs assessment mission to Yaoundé, during which concrete modalities for the establishment of the Centre were worked out.

20. On 15 and 16 March 2001, the first subregional workshop on human rights education in central Africa took place in Yaoundé. The workshop was organized in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Institute of International Relations of Cameroon. Forty representatives from Governments, national human rights institutions, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions, as well as representatives from the ECCAS secretariat, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Department for Disarmament Affairs, attended the workshop.

21. At the conclusion of the workshop, member States adopted a declaration on human rights education in central Africa. The declaration assessed progress made in educational systems at the formal and informal sectors at the national level and in the training of national cadres.

22. Participants also suggested the following priorities for inclusion in the Centre's work programme for the 2001-2002 biennium: (i) the holding of three training workshops for the military, political leaders and national authorities responsible for the preparation and implementation of human rights programmes; (ii) the establishment of a database of existing resources and capacities of the subregion in the field of human rights; (iii) the carrying out of a study to assess existing training programmes in the field of human rights in the subregion; (iv) the development of educational materials for use in schools, extra-curricular activities, the rural environment and the media; and (v) the strengthening of the partnership between the Centre and the ECCAS secretariat.

23. With regard to the partnership with the ECCAS secretariat, the Office of the High Commissioner will seek to build on ongoing dialogue with the Secretary-General and other senior officials of ECCAS with a view to integrating human rights issues in the programmes and activities of ECCAS, especially within COPAX, FOMAC and MARAC.

E. World Food Programme

24. The World Food Programme (WFP) does not have a direct cooperative link with ECCAS, but

cooperative arrangements are ongoing with individual countries in the subregion, including Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe. Furthermore, WFP recently set up an office in Yaoundé to develop and implement an integrated regional programme for the central African subregion. WFP carries out emergency and development programmes, which contribute to ECCAS efforts to achieve economic integration and development, promote democracy and human rights and consolidate peace and security. The programmes provide support to refugees and internally displaced persons and undertake protracted relief and recovery operations in Angola, Burundi, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon and Rwanda.

25. WFP is presently assisting vulnerable persons through its development programmes in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe. It also operates school feeding projects in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad and Sao Tome and Principe and similar pilot projects are being implemented in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.

F. World Health Organization

26. The World Health Organization (WHO) does not have direct links with ECCAS, but is very active in the subregion, with its world tuberculosis programme and its massive efforts against diseases of poverty, launched with its partners in 2000, which target HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, all of which are key health issues in Africa. The WHO polio eradication programme is targeting 15 million difficult-to-reach children in conflict zones in Angola, the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, starting in July 2001 with the synchronized National Immunization Days. The initiative has attracted significant private sector and political support to combat the social consequences of diseases of poverty, including childhood diseases in the central African subregion.

G. United Nations Development Programme

27. The United Nations Development Programme is assisting in strengthening ECCAS institutional structures through capacity-building studies, such as those on the establishment of a self-funding autonomous mechanism of institutions of integration in central Africa, and the operationalization of new structures. A draft document on the reinforcement of the capacities of ECCAS is being elaborated. The aim of the project, which is to be financed mostly by UNDP, is to revive the integration process in the subregion through the reinforcement of institutions. The project would also require collaboration by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and OAU.

28. Project RAF/99/016, entitled "Regional report on human development in Central and Western Africa", is an initial phase in the assessment of world reports on human development in order to analyse the impact and the validity of this tool from an African perspective and to make recommendations that could be useful in the preparation of future world reports. It also anticipates the participation of a large number of regional economic organizations in order to shed light on the importance of regional integration in meeting the challenges of globalization. Two working committees have been established, which met for the first time on 18 May 2001.

H. United Nations Environment Programme

29. ECCAS, with the support and close collaboration of the United Nations Environment Programme, is preparing the meeting of the Subregional Preparatory Committee for Central Africa for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, scheduled to be held in Libreville from 17 to 19 September 2001.

I. Economic Commission for Africa

30. The Economic Commission for Africa, jointly with OAU, serviced the negotiations that led to the establishment in 1983 of ECCAS. Subsequently, ECA implemented the UNDP-funded multi-sectoral project on assistance to ECCAS from 1989 to 1993. In 1998, ECA was requested to launch the process of

revitalizing ECCAS. However, given limited resources, the secretariat has relied on the assistance of partners such as ECA to carry out this task.

31. In this regard, the Secretary-General of ECCAS and his Deputy have undertaken several visits to ECA headquarters in Addis Ababa for discussions with the Executive Secretary and the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA. Additional contacts have taken place in the margins of various regional conferences in Abuja, Tripoli and Algiers. ECA is also assisting in preparing the project document that is being used by ECCAS for securing UNDP financial assistance. To that end, the ECCAS secretariat has requested ECA to help carry out the following activities: (i) prepare two studies on the establishment of a self-financing mechanism for ECCAS and a compensation system for the loss of revenue likely to result from the trade liberalization scheme. The two studies were completed in 2000 and approved by the ECCAS Council of Ministers in Libreville in February 2001. ECA assistance is needed for the operationalization of the recommendations of the studies; (ii) prepare a study on a trade liberalization scheme; (iii) prepare a study on the revitalization of the Central African Clearing House; (iv) strengthen the capacities of the ECCAS secretariat and those of its member States in analysis, negotiations and formulation of sound integration policies, including the creation of a web site at the secretariat; (v) provide assistance for the revitalization of the Central African Federation of Chambers of Commerce; (vi) evaluate and strengthen the Network of Women of Central Africa with a view to making it a viable specialized institution of ECCAS; (vii) undertake a study on the establishment of the ECCAS cooperation fund; and (viii) prepare a study on economic convergence criteria.

32. In order to structure and guide their future cooperation more effectively, the ECCAS secretariat and ECA are considering the signing of a joint memorandum of understanding.

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Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe

Report of the Secretary-General**

I. Introduction

1. On 20 October 2000, the General Assembly unanimously adopted resolution 55/3 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe. In that resolution, the Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to continue exploring possibilities for further enhancement of cooperation, information exchange and coordination between the United Nations and the Council and decided to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-sixth session the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe".

2. By the same resolution, the Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-sixth session on cooperation between the two organizations in implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted in compliance with that request.

II. Consultations and exchanges of information

3. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe has continued through direct contact between the secretariats of the two organizations, the observer status of the Council in the General Assembly and the cooperation agreements between the Council and various specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations. The Secretaries-General of the two organizations met in Strasbourg, France, in October 2000 and again in New York. In February 2001 the Secretary-General of the Council participated in the fourth high-level meeting between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and heads of regional organizations on the subject of cooperation for peace-building. The meeting identified key areas for future collaboration in the field of peace-building and drew up an expanded practical framework for cooperative activities. The Security Council welcomed the outcome of this meeting.

* A/56/150.
** The footnote requested by the General Assembly in resolution 54/248 was not included in the submission.

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III. Information received from the United Nations system

A. United Nations Headquarters

1. Department of Peacekeeping Operations

(a) United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH)

4. Relations between UNMIBH and the Council of Europe have traditionally been very close both at the practical and political levels. The Secretary-General's Special Representative and Coordinator of United Nations Operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Jacques Paul Klein, has consistently taken the lead in public discussion to express the need for Bosnia and Herzegovina to accede to the Council of Europe. He has been a strong public advocate, both in Bosnia and in Europe, as well as in the United States, of setting straightforward and achievable criteria for Bosnian membership in the firm belief that the internal discipline of the Council would encourage good governance, while acceptance into the wider European family would discourage emigration and encourage return.

5. UNMIBH has participated in all the tripartite meetings in 2000 and 2001 between the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council.

6. Over the past year, UNMIBH has handed over its mandated task of judicial assessment to the Office of the High Representative for Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina. Following detailed discussions in Sarajevo and in Strasbourg, France, it was decided that the Council would cooperate fully with the new Independent Judicial Commission, sponsored by the Office of the High Representative.

7. UNMIBH and the Council cooperate within the Human Rights Steering Board, which establishes priorities and evaluates progress on human rights issues. UNMIBH benefits greatly from legal opinions given by Council experts on compatibility of Bosnia and Herzegovina legislation with the European Convention on Human Rights. The Council has also coordinated prison reform issues with local authorities and UNMIBH.

(b) United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)

8. UNMIK and the Council of Europe cooperate on many levels, particularly in the realm of judicial training, legal education and election monitoring. In this context, the Council has continued to assist UNMIK in matters of legislation and reforms in Kosovo with a view to bringing them in line with the European Convention on Human Rights. It has also been active in restructuring and reforming the judiciary, the protection of minorities, property rights and population registration, childhood and youth programmes (including juvenile justice), education policies and the protection and restoration of cultural heritage.

9. At the request of UNMIK, the Council of Europe also assumed responsibility for the observation of the municipal electoral process in October 2000, when cooperation between UNMIK-pillar III and the Council was extensive. The Election Observation Mission of the Council was conducted in three stages, including the observation of civil and voter registration, the election campaign and the municipal elections themselves. The Council has played an integral role in the UNMIK capacity-building programme and is continuing to do so in the electoral process leading up to the Kosovo Assembly elections, scheduled to be held in autumn 2001.

10. The Council of Europe has invited both international and local professionals to take part in international conferences on topics of particular interest and relevance to UNMIK structure, the judiciary and civil society. The Council and UNMIK collaborated extensively in the creation of the Kosovo Judicial Institute to increase judges' and lawyers' understanding of international human rights standards and the applicable law. The Institute organizes training and workshops for the judiciary on topics such as domestic violence and war crimes issues. Over the past two years, the Council has set up a number of instructional seminars within Kosovo for both judges and prosecutors. Most recently, the Council and the Institute held a two-day course for the local judiciary on articles 5 and 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights. There are future sessions planned to assist further in the training of defence counsels on points of law and legal advocacy.

11. The Council has organized a number of conferences on issues of relevance to the work of UNMIK, including one in Athens in July 2001 on the trafficking of women, where a regional plan of action on combating trafficking was adopted. Similarly, UNMIK participated in discussions convened by the Council in Strasbourg in May 2001 on the problem of national minorities in Europe.

(c) United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia

12. Representatives of the Council have continuously exchanged views with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Georgia, Ambassador Dieter Boden, and cooperated in the joint organization of a seminar on State-legal aspects of the settlement of the Abkhaz conflict, held in Pitsunda, Georgia, in February 2001. The Council also took part in the Joint Assessment Mission (United Nations/OSCE/Council of Europe/European Commission) to the Gali district, Abkhazia, Georgia, in November 2000.

2. Department of Economic and Social Affairs

13. Following the Council's active participation in the special session of the General Assembly on social development, held in Geneva in 2000, the European Committee for Social Cohesion has been discussing the follow-up to the special session at the Pan-European level. Senior staff took part in these discussions. As a first concrete step, the Council and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat organized a joint expert reflection meeting on pathways to social development, which compared the approaches of different world regions to the process of social development. The Council's Director of Social Affairs and Health also contributed to the annual meeting of the Commission for Social Development in February 2001.

B. United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG)

14. Since 1994, the United Nations offices and agencies and the Council of Europe, along with OSCE, have participated in the annual high-level tripartite meetings to exchange information and to promote coordination of activities in the areas of common concern. The Director-General of UNOG is in regular contact with the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe and the Chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly, both of whom visit Geneva periodically and vice versa. Resolutions of the Parliamentary Assembly, in particular in addressing the issue of United Nations reform, have called repeatedly for close collaboration between the Council secretariat and the Director-General of UNOG and, through him, with the organizations of the United Nations system based in Geneva. The Director-General has invited the Council, as is the case with OSCE, to participate in activities of the informal research and training network linking the Geneva- and Turin-based United Nations research institutes and the United Nations University and its affiliated institutes.

C. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

15. The Council of Europe was actively involved in the preparations for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001. In October 2000, the European Conference against Racism, "All different, all equal: from principle to practice", was held in Strasbourg with over 500 participants.

16. OHCHR is regularly represented at meetings organized by the Council with national human rights institutions and ombudsmen, including at the first round table with national institutions (March 2000) and the recent review meeting held in the framework of the Council's Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (May 2001), both of which were held in Strasbourg. Representatives of the Council, in turn, regularly observe meetings of United Nations human rights bodies, including the Commission on Human Rights, the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and its Working Group on Minorities.

17. OHCHR and the Council have been working together for several years on the question of trafficking in human beings. In 1999, OHCHR co-funded an information and prevention campaign on the risks of trafficking, organized by the Council in Albania, which was mainly addressed to refugees from Kosovo. OHCHR and the Council also cooperate actively in the Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings set up under the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe.

D. United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP)

18. In 1994, the Council's Pompidou Group and UNODCCP jointly launched a long-term project, with the financial contribution provided by the Government of Switzerland, to help local researchers systematically collect and interpret reliable data in order to construct a coherent picture of patterns and trends in drug use in nine cities across six countries, namely, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. This second phase contributed to the consolidation of drug misuse monitoring systems at city and national levels and generated qualitative information on patterns and new trends of drug misuse. It thereby provided data for a rapid situation assessment of drug misuse as a basis for planning and evaluating demand reduction policies in the central European subregion.

19. UNODCCP participated in the activities of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and attended the First Regional Steering Group and Advisory and Contact Group Meeting of the Organized Crime Initiative, hosted by the Bulgarian Ministry of the Interior in Sofia on 9 and 10 January 2001.

E. Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)

20. The Executive Secretary of ECE paid an official visit to the Council and its Parliamentary Assembly in March 2001 to review common areas of work in order to intensify cooperation between the two organizations. In the field of gender equality, the Council played a major role in the substantive preparation of the ECE Regional Preparatory Meeting on the 2000 Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action by providing its expertise in three major areas: violence against women, trafficking in human beings and strengthening the national mechanisms for the advancement of women.

21. Close cooperation has also been developed between ECE and the Council on the follow-up to the Conference on Population and Development. The Council has recently streamlined its population activities, focusing on demographic statistics, particularly for policy makers. Finally, the Council is associated with the preparatory process of the ECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing, to be held in Berlin in 2002.

22. Following the accident in Baia Mare, Romania, ECE and the Council are taking steps to ensure coordination of their work on the transboundary impact of industrial accidents in terms of water pollution. Furthermore, the Council is an active partner in the Environment for Europe Process. The ECE is the secretariat for the preparatory process for the fifth ministerial conference "Environment for Europe" in 2003.

23. In the context of the aforementioned process, the Council and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) are responsible for biodiversity issues, in particular the implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, which aims to stop and reverse the degradation of biological and landscape diversity in Europe and to ensure sustainable management of the natural environment. This initiative coordinates joint European action in the framework of the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity and provides a regional instrument for its implementation. The Strategy is served by a joint Council of Europe and UNEP secretariat, which in 2000 concluded a memorandum of cooperation with the secretariat of the Rio Convention.

24. The Council is very active on the issues of crime and corruption, having adopted civil and penal law conventions on corruption and developed guiding principles and codes of conduct for public officials agreed to by the Council's Committee of Ministers. ECE has played a role in the establishment of the Regional Centre for Combating Transborder Crime in Bucharest, within the framework of the South-east European Cooperative Initiative. Contact is being made to see how the Centre could possibly be the venue to promote the conventions and guidelines of the Council in this area.

25. In the area of human settlements, it has been agreed that links will be strengthened between the Council's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Commission's Housing and Urban Management Advisory Network. The Commission is continuing its well-established relationship with the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development of the Parliamentary Assembly. The Committee's Sub-Committee on International Economic Relations normally meets in Geneva once a year with the

Commission's Economic Analysis Division in order to share views on key economic issues and problems in the region. Both ECE and the Council are active in south-eastern Europe, the former within the framework of the South-east European Cooperative Initiative and the latter within the framework of the European Union Stability Pact.

F. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

26. The Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography of the Council's Parliamentary Assembly, in cooperation with the Parliament of Azerbaijan, organized a parliamentary meeting on refugees and displaced persons in the South Caucasus in May 2001. Its purpose was to assess how far the humanitarian needs of the refugees and displaced persons in the region were being met and what progress was being made in implementing solutions and defining ways of improving the situation. The UNDP Resident Representative/Resident Coordinator in Azerbaijan made a presentation on UNDP action in the South Caucasus republics, focusing on strategies for promoting returns, integration and resettlement, as well as on current projects, new approaches, and remaining obstacles.

G. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

27. Since 1996, when UNHCR established a liaison office to the European institutions in Strasbourg, its cooperation with the Council has developed into a comprehensive partnership, focusing on the development of legal standards, the raising of awareness regarding human rights and the strengthening of civil societies as they relate to persons of concern to UNHCR. The relationship between the Council and UNHCR has evolved significantly as the Council's unique Pan-European membership coincides with the increased operational involvement of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the problems of refugees and displaced populations of central, eastern and south-eastern Europe.

28. Through the promotion of democratic stability, protection of human rights and the monitoring of its member states' commitments, the Council also contributes to the mandate of UNHCR by fostering an environment conducive to improving the situation of refugees and asylum-seekers and, in the longer term, to enhancing the stability of Europe and preventing further population displacements. The complementarity of their mandate was given new impetus in 1999 when UNHCR and the Council signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation. This framework of cooperation seeks to maximize the specificities of each organization by encouraging mutually-reinforcing partnership in areas of common interest, notably through reciprocal representation at relevant working meetings and the implementation of joint cooperation activities, where appropriate.

29. With regard to overall coordination and consultation mechanisms, high-level visits take place between UNHCR and the Council secretariat on a regular basis. As regional situations evolve in Europe, consultation and coordination on the development of integrated strategies and action plans are increasingly taking place between the two bodies, together with other relevant partners. UNHCR was invited to explain its strategy and share its views on inter-agency coordination in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with the Committee of Ministers in December 2000. Field-based offices of both organizations also regularly consult and share information. The specificity and comparative advantage of each organization's mandate and expertise have been mutually reinforcing in many areas of joint cooperation. For UNHCR, one of the most significant aspects of this cooperation is the elaboration of legal standards related to asylum and to the treatment of refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as the development of national citizenship legislation. Following its active involvement in the first European Conference on Nationality in 1999, UNHCR will also address the second European Conference, to be held in Strasbourg in October 2001.

30. The Specialist Group on Roma Gypsies is a technical body of the European Committee on Migration, to which UNHCR devotes particular attention since a large number of refugees and displaced persons in south-eastern Europe are of Roma origin. Aside from actively participating in Specialist Group meetings that focus on the development of institutions and national strategies, UNHCR is involved in a number of joint concrete activities undertaken at the field level. In September 2000, UNHCR, OSCE and

the Council conducted two workshops in Skopje for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and regional experts, respectively, on "The international protection of refugees in the Balkans: the case of the Roma refugees and internally displaced persons". Full coordination and consultation also takes place concerning the development and implementation of Stability Pact initiatives related to persons of Roma origin. Within the Stability Pact objective, UNHCR and the Council's Development Bank are also exploring modalities of concrete cooperation to support the implementation of solutions for refugees and displaced persons in that region.

31. As in past years, UNHCR and the Council are implementing a joint programme of technical assistance in selected member States. This consists of co-organizing and conducting workshops on a variety of thematic issues of relevance to both organizations. For example, workshops will be held in Armenia, on border management and the treatment of asylum-seekers, in Azerbaijan, on the implementation of NGO legislation and on the implementation of citizenship law, and in the Russian Federation, on citizenship. For the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region, the foregoing activities also constitute part of the joint thematic work plan, which reflects the commitment of UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration, OSCE and the Council to implement the follow-up to the 1996 Geneva CIS Conference, as launched in July 2000. The Council has formally joined UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration and OSCE as co-lead agency in this thematic framework with a focus on citizenship and statelessness, as well as on the legal framework for NGOs. In Georgia, the Council and UNHCR collaborate on the issue of the return of the formerly deported Meskhetian population as well as on questions of restitution of property and tenancy rights relating to the conflict in South Ossetia.

32. While UNHCR collaborates with a number of Parliamentary Assembly committees, it is with the Council's Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography that UNHCR enjoys particularly active and fruitful cooperation. Whenever possible, UNHCR field offices assist the visits of the Committee's rapporteurs, as was the case for Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in September 2000. UNHCR participates as an observer in Committee meetings and shares information and observations with regard to draft reports and recommendations. This is the case for the report and draft recommendation on UNHCR and the fiftieth anniversary of the Geneva Convention, debated in the Parliamentary Assembly's June 2001 session. One proposed recommendation seeks to reaffirm member States' commitment to the 1951 Convention, to encourage their active participation in the UNHCR-launched process of Global Consultations on International Protection and to promote accession to the Convention for the five member States that are not signatories to these human rights instruments.

33. As the broader regional human rights instrument, the European Convention on Human Rights constitutes a useful complement to the international instruments specifically related to the protection of refugees, in particular the 1951 Convention. This is particularly so since it establishes an enforcement mechanism for its implementation — the European Court of Human Rights — whose jurisprudence can complement international refugee law. UNHCR and the Council have jointly examined this complementarity through the organization of two colloquies on the Court and the protection of refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced persons. UNHCR cooperates with the Court through the sharing of information, particularly concerning UNHCR public protection guidelines related to specific refugee and displacement situations. In cooperation with the Council's Directorate General of Human Rights, national workshops on the European Convention on Human Rights and its relevance to the protection of refugees, displaced persons and asylum-seekers are also jointly conducted in selected countries. UNHCR has also become involved in the Council's programme to promote the regional parliamentary ombudsman institution in the Russian Federation, through technical support for ombudsmen who will work with UNHCR on cases of forced migrants and asylum-seekers in their particular region.

34. In the past 10 months, the UNHCR Representative in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, acting on behalf of the humanitarian community as a whole, has cooperated with the Council in the preparation of various assistance programmes. In early April 2001, for instance, a mission consisting of two advisers from the Council's Development Bank visited Skopje, upon invitation from the Government, to provide emergency loans and assist with the rehabilitation of the villages affected by the first phase of the conflict. The UNHCR Representative provided preliminary information on

the extent of damage to homes and offered to assist, whenever possible, in ensuring conditions conducive for the return of the affected population to their homes.

H. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

35. The Council of Europe has developed a close working relationship with UNICEF, in particular in view of the forthcoming Special Session on Children, to which the Committee of Ministers has submitted a political message.

IV. Observations

36. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council has been longstanding. However, since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 55/3, interaction between the two organizations has continued to improve. Both organizations continue to have shared interests which lend themselves to cooperation in such areas as conflict-prevention, post-conflict peace-building and confidence-building measures aimed at increasing tolerance and understanding between people belonging to different ethnic groups, especially those within countries in crisis.

37. It is envisaged that ongoing cooperation will be enhanced in the months ahead pursuant to the General Assembly's call to continue exploring possibilities for further enhancement of cooperation, information exchange and coordination between the United Nations and the Council of Europe. The prospects remain extremely promising. In order to apprise the Assembly more fully of concrete cooperation measures, it would be most useful to report to the Assembly on such cooperation every other year. It is therefore recommended that the next report of the Secretary-General on this subject be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session. Accordingly, the Assembly may wish to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-eighth session the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe".

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Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization

Implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions

Report of the Secretary-General**

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* A/56/150.

** The present report has been submitted after the established deadline in order to take into account the deliberations of the July 2001 session of the Economic and Social Council.

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I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-fifth session, the General Assembly adopted without a vote resolution 55/157 of 12 December 2000, entitled "Implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions". In the resolution, the General Assembly, inter alia:

(a) Renewed its invitation to the Security Council to consider the establishment of further mechanisms or procedures, as appropriate, for consultations as early as possible under Article 50 of the Charter of the United Nations with third States which are or may be confronted with special economic problems arising from the carrying out of preventive or enforcement measures imposed by the Council under Chapter VII of the Charter, with regard to a solution of those problems, including appropriate ways and means for increasing the effectiveness of its methods and procedures applied in the consideration of requests by the affected States for assistance;

(b) Welcomed the measures taken by the Security Council since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 50/51 of 11 December 1995, most recently the note by the President of the Council dated 17 April 2000 (S/2000/319), whereby the members of the Council decided to establish an informal working group to develop general recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of United Nations sanctions, looked forward to the findings of the working group, in particular to those regarding the issues of unintended impacts of sanctions and assistance to States in implementing sanctions, and strongly recommended that the Council continue its efforts to further enhance the functioning of the sanctions committees, to streamline their working procedures and to facilitate access to them by representatives of States that find themselves confronted with special economic problems arising from the carrying out of sanctions;

(c) Requested the Secretary-General to pursue the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/51, 51/208 of 17 December 1996, 52/162 of 15 December 1997, 53/107 of 8 December 1998 and 54/107 of 9 December 1999 and to ensure that the competent units within the Secretariat develop the adequate capacity and appropriate modalities, technical procedures and guidelines to continue, on a regular basis, to collate and coordinate information about international assistance available to third States affected by the implementation of sanctions, to continue developing a possible methodology for assessing the adverse consequences actually incurred by third States and to explore innovative and practical measures of assistance to the affected third States;

(d) Welcomed the report of the Secretary-General containing a summary of the deliberations and main findings of the ad hoc expert group meeting on developing a methodology for assessing the consequences incurred by third States as a result of preventive or enforcement measures and on exploring innovative and practical measures of international assistance to the affected third States (A/53/312), and renewed its invitation to States and relevant international organizations within and outside the United Nations system which had not yet done so to provide their views regarding the report of the ad hoc expert group meeting;

(e) Renewed its request to the Secretary-General to present to the General Assembly any further views that he may have on the deliberations and main findings, including the recommendations, of the ad hoc expert group on the implementation of the provisions of the Charter related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions, taking into account the views of States, the organizations of the United Nations system, international financial institutions and other international organizations, as well as the forthcoming report of the informal working group of the Security Council on general issues relating to sanctions;

(f) Reaffirmed the important role of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Committee for Programme and Coordination in mobilizing and monitoring, as appropriate, the economic assistance efforts by the international community and the United Nations system on behalf of States confronted with special economic problems arising from the carrying out of preventive or enforcement measures imposed by the Security Council and in identifying solutions to the special economic problems of those States;

(g) Took note of the decision of the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2000/32 of 28 July 2000, to continue its consideration of the question of assistance to third States affected by the application of

sanctions, invited the Council, at its organizational session for 2001, to make appropriate arrangements for this purpose within its programme of work for 2001 and decided to transmit the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the provisions of the Charter related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions (A/55/295 and Add.1), together with the relevant background materials, to the Council at its substantive session of 2001;

(h) Invited the organizations of the United Nations system, international financial institutions, other international organizations, regional organizations and Member States to address more specifically and directly, where appropriate, special economic problems of third States affected by sanctions imposed under Chapter VII of the Charter and, for that purpose, to consider improving procedures for consultations to maintain a constructive dialogue with such States, including through regular and frequent meetings as well as special meetings between the affected third States and the donor community, with the participation of United Nations agencies and other international organizations;

(i) Requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session.

2. The present report has been prepared in response to that request.

II. Measures for further improvement of the procedures and working methods of the Security Council and its sanctions committees related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions

3. By a note dated 9 April 2001 (S/2001/417), the Secretary-General drew the attention of the members of the Security Council to General Assembly resolution 55/157, in particular paragraphs 1 and 2 thereof (see paras. 1 (a) and (b) above).

4. Taking account of the note by the President of the Security Council of 29 January 1999 (S/1999/92) and other relevant proposals and recommendations, the members of the Security Council decided to establish, on a temporary basis, an informal working group of the Council to develop general recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of United Nations sanctions (see S/2000/319). The members of the Council noted the work of the General Assembly in this area and also observed that there existed considerable recent scholarship on the subject of United Nations sanctions that merited further consideration by the Council. The Working Group, chaired by Ambassador Chowdhury (Bangladesh), benefited from available sanctions expertise, including by being briefed, on a case-by-case basis, by appropriate experts. The Working Group has examined the issue of unintended impact of sanctions on third States and assistance to Member States in implementing sanctions. It was to report its findings to the Council by 30 November 2000, but the Group was unable to reach a consensus on all of the recommendations. At the informal consultations held on 14 and 15 February 2001, the members of the Security Council took up the Chairman's proposed outcome of the Working Group. Following an exchange of views, the members of the Council decided to continue consideration of this issue at a later stage, with a view to reaching consensus on outstanding matters. Ambassador Chowdhury has informed the Council that he will report directly to it when agreement has been reached.

III. Review of the capacity and modalities of the Secretariat for implementing the intergovernmental mandates and recommendations of the ad hoc expert group meeting on assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions

5. The Secretary-General has taken note of paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 55/157 (see para. 1 (c) above). In this regard, the Secretary-General notes that the arrangements that were put in place in the Secretariat in 1996, as described in his report of that year on the matter (A/51/317, paras. 4-11) and in his 1997 report (A/52/308, para. 5), continue to apply.

6. The Secretary-General has also taken note of paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 55/157 (see para. 1 (e) above). The Secretary-General wishes to reiterate his understanding that the Assembly is interested in receiving his views concerning the feasibility of implementing the recommendations of the ad hoc expert group considering the limited capacity and resources of the Secretariat. In this connection, the Secretary-General once again wishes to indicate that the issues relating to the relevant capacity and modalities of the Secretariat continue to be under review by several intergovernmental bodies that are concerned with the question of assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions. The Secretary-General has provided and will continue to provide his full support for the ongoing review process, including his views and recommendations as required, in order to ensure the implementation of relevant intergovernmental mandates in a timely and efficient manner.

IV. Views provided by Governments and relevant international organizations regarding the report of the ad hoc expert group meeting and related issues of international assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions

7. In accordance with paragraphs 4 and 8 of General Assembly resolution 55/157 (see paras. 1 (d) and (h) above), States and relevant international organizations within and outside the United Nations system that had not yet done so were invited to provide their views regarding the report of the ad hoc expert group meeting on assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions, as contained in the 1998 report of the Secretary-General on the subject (see A/53/312, sect. IV). It will be recalled that the communications received in 1999 and 2000 from Governments and the relevant international organizations and institutions inside and outside the United Nations system on the same matter were summarized in the previous reports of the Secretary-General (A/54/383 and Add.1 and A/55/295 and Add.1 respectively). Since then, no additional comments have been provided. Any further input to be received before the end of 2001 will be included in addenda to the present report.

V. Recent developments related to the role of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Committee for Programme and Coordination in the area of assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions

8. Pursuant to paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 55/157 (see para. 1 (f) above), the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Committee for Programme and Coordination have continued to play their respective roles in the area of assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions.

General Assembly

9. At its fifty-fifth session, the General Assembly had before it the report of the Secretary-General on economic assistance to the Eastern European States affected by the developments in the Balkans (A/55/620 and Corr.1). That report superseded a series of five reports of the Secretary-General on economic assistance to States affected by the implementation of the Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (A/49/356, A/50/423, A/51/356, A/52/535 and A/54/534), submitted to the Assembly in previous years.

10. In its resolution 55/170 of 14 December 2000, entitled "Economic assistance to the Eastern European States affected by the developments in the Balkans", the General Assembly, taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/55/620 and Corr.1) and the conclusions contained therein, welcomed the support already provided by the international community, in particular by the European Union and other major donors, to the affected States to assist them in coping with their special economic problems during the transition period following the developments in the Balkans. Also, the Assembly expressed concern at the persistence of special economic problems confronting the Eastern European States affected by the developments in the Balkans, in particular their impact on regional trade and economic relations and on the navigation along the Danube and on the Adriatic Sea, and invited all States and the relevant international organizations, both within and outside the United Nations system, in particular the international financial

institutions, to continue to take into account the special needs and situations of the affected States in providing support and assistance to their efforts for economic recovery, structural adjustment and development. The Secretary-General was requested to report to the Assembly at its fifty-sixth session on the implementation of the resolution.

Economic and Social Council

11. By a note dated 18 June 2001 on assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions (E/2001/90), the Secretary-General drew the attention of the members of the Economic and Social Council to General Assembly resolution 55/157, in particular to paragraph 7 thereof (see para. 1 (g) above). Accordingly, the Council, at its substantive session of 2001, held in Geneva from 2 to 26 July 2001, had before it the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions (A/55/295 and Add.1). In the note, particular reference was made to section IV of the report, which contains an update of the views provided by Governments and relevant international organizations regarding the report of the ad hoc expert group meeting and related issues of international assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions.

12. In a decision adopted on 26 July 2001, the Economic and Social Council took note of the note of the Secretary-General (E/2001/90).

Committee for Programme and Coordination

13. The Committee for Programme and Coordination, at its forty-first session, held in New York from 11 June to 6 July 2001, considered the annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for 2000 (E/2001/55), which included a section on assistance to countries invoking Article 50 of the Charter of the United Nations. In its conclusions and recommendations on the matter, the Committee reaffirmed the important role of the Administrative Committee on Coordination in coordinating the implementation of the relevant intergovernmental mandates for mobilizing and monitoring the economic assistance efforts of the international community and the United Nations system to States confronted with special economic problems arising from the implementation of preventive or enforcement measures imposed by the Security Council and in identifying solutions to the special economic problems of those States, as well as in providing support for the efforts of the States affected by the developments in the Balkans for their economic recovery, structural adjustment and development.[1]

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/56/16, para. 420).